



## RESEARCH NOTE LS-4

LAKE STATES FOREST EXPERIMENT STATION • U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

**Lake States Wood-Product Imports and Exports  
Via the St. Lawrence Seaway**

A brief study of overseas imports and exports of wood products was made by the Station's marketing research project in Duluth to find out what influence the expanded St. Lawrence Seaway might have had for the Lake States area. Data were assembled for Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan ports engaged in overseas commerce for the years 1957 to 1961. The Seaway was opened to deep-draft ocean vessels in the early spring of 1959. In that year, largely due to heavy imports of woodpulp, the total tonnage of wood and paper products that moved through the Seaway increased tremendously. This total volume has since decreased, although not to pre-1959 levels (table 1).

The significance of the large woodpulp shipments in 1959 is not clearly understood; they were, however, general throughout the area with several ports showing substantial increases. Woodpulp has for many years been an important import commodity, ranking fourth in total tonnage and dollar value for Lake States ports. However, sizable fluctuations have taken place from one year to the next and no definite trend is indicated. Because of this characteristic plus the fact that woodpulp represents such a large portion of the total overseas trade, the rather steady upward trends for relatively minor import items such as paper and paper manufactures, plywood and veneers, and wood manufactures are obscured when only total tonnage for all commodities is observed. The relationship of woodpulp imports to total import-export tonnage of the Lake States in percentage is as follows: 1957--97, 1958--85, 1959--94, 1960--63, and 1961--78. Lake States woodpulp im-

ports have amounted to approximately 10 percent of the total U. S. woodpulp imports each year for the years studied.

Although imports have dominated the overseas wood commerce in these three States, the proportion of exports has shown a mild increase in the sixties. Imports, which accounted for more than 98 percent of the total overseas wood product traffic via the Seaway from 1957 to 1959, dropped to 73 percent in 1960, then rose to 94 percent in 1961. The big increase in exports in 1960 appears to be due primarily to one large shipment of lumber; however, in both 1960 and 1961 increases were recorded in nearly every category.

Wood and paper commodities involved in overseas commerce at Lake States ports are listed under several categories, some of which require explanation (table 1). Paper Base Stocks, N.E.C. (not elsewhere classified), includes pulp made from reclaimed papers or fibers other than wood. Paper and Manufactures, N.E.C., covers all fine and coarse papers, tissues, and boards, including hardboards, but excludes newsprint. Wood, Unmanufactured, N.E.C., includes such items as brierwood, caning, and Christmas trees. Lumber and Shingles includes flooring, furniture stock, and blanks for handles, bats, and skis. Wood Manufactures, N.E.C., takes in such things as millwork, prefabricated structural shapes, and furniture.

Ten Lake States ports have had wood-product foreign commerce traffic during these 5 years — one in Minnesota, three in Wisconsin, and six in Michigan. Those ac-



TABLE 1. — *Lake States overseas imports and exports of wood products via the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway, 1957-1961<sup>1</sup>*  
(Thousand short tons)

Year	Minnesota		Wisconsin		Michigan		Total <sup>2</sup>	
	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.
ALL WOOD AND PAPER PRODUCTS								
1957	2.7	..	8.7	0.1	16.0	*	27.3	0.2
1958	3.8	..	0.5	0.2	22.5	0.2	26.8	0.5
1959	*	..	31.4	0.6	44.2	0.3	75.6	1.0
1960	2.2	*	13.0	13.5	21.6	0.1	36.8	13.6
1961	*	*	14.5	1.2	19.4	0.8	33.9	2.0
WOODPULP								
1957	2.7	..	8.7	..	15.4	..	26.7	..
1958	3.8	..	..	..	19.4	0.2	23.2	0.2
1959	..	..	30.7	..	41.1	..	71.8	..
1960	2.2	..	12.0	*	17.7	..	31.9	*
1961	..	..	13.0	..	15.1	..	28.1	..
PAPER BASE STOCK, N.E.C. <sup>3</sup>								
1957	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1958	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1959	..	..	..	..	0.1	..	0.1	..
1960	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1961	..	..	..	..	..	0.5	..	0.5
PAPER AND MANUFACTURES, N.E.C. <sup>3</sup>								
1957	..	..	*	0.1	0.5	*	0.6	0.1
1958	*	..	0.5	*	1.4	0.1	1.9	0.1
1959	..	..	0.3	0.3	2.4	0.2	2.7	0.5
1960	..	*	0.3	3.8	2.3	0.1	2.7	3.9
1961	*	*	0.5	0.7	2.0	0.1	2.6	0.8
TOTAL ALL PULP AND PAPER PRODUCTS								
1957	2.7	..	8.7	0.1	15.9	*	27.3	0.1
1958	3.8	..	0.5	*	20.8	0.2	25.1	0.3
1959	..	..	31.0	0.3	43.6	0.2	74.6	0.5
1960	2.2	*	12.3	3.8	20.0	0.1	34.6	3.9
1961	*	..	13.5	0.7	17.1	0.6	30.7	1.3

Year	Minnesota		Wisconsin		Michigan		Total <sup>2</sup>	
	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.	Imp.	Exp.
LOGS								
1957	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1958	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1959	..	..	*	0.2	..	*	*	0.2
1960	..	..	..	0.5	*	*	*	0.5
1961	..	..	..	0.3	..	0.1	..	0.4
WOOD, UNMANUFACTURED, N.E.C. <sup>3</sup>								
1960	..	..	..	..	*	..	*	..
1961	..	..	..	*	*	..	*	*
LUMBER AND SHINGLES								
1957	..	..	..	*	..	..	..	..
1958	..	..	..	0.2	1.3	..	1.3	0.2
1959	..	..	..	0.1	*	*	*	0.2
1960	..	*	0.5	9.1	0.1	*	0.6	9.2
1961	..	*	0.4	0.2	0.8	*	1.2	0.2
PLYWOOD, VENEER AND COOPERAGE								
1957	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
1958	..	..	*	..	0.2	..	0.3	..
1959	..	..	0.2	*	0.4	..	0.6	*
1960	..	..	*	*	1.3	*	1.4	*
1961	..	..	0.5	*	1.2	*	1.7	*
WOOD MANUFACTURES, N.E.C. <sup>3</sup>								
1957	..	..	*	*	0.1	*	0.1	*
1958	..	..	*	*	0.1	..	0.2	*
1959	..	..	0.1	*	0.2	*	0.3	*
1960	..	..	*	*	0.2	*	0.2	0.1
1961	..	..	0.1	*	0.3	*	0.4	0.1
TOTAL ALL WOOD PRODUCTS								
1957	..	..	*	*	0.1	*	0.1	*
1958	..	..	0.1	0.2	1.7	..	1.8	0.2
1959	..	..	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.1	1.0	0.4
1960	..	..	0.6	9.7	1.6	0.1	2.2	9.7
1961	..	..	1.0	0.6	2.3	0.1	3.3	0.7

<sup>1</sup> Source: Waterborne Commerce of The United States, Part III, Waterways and Harbors of the Great Lakes, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1962. Data do not include trade with Canada.

<sup>2</sup> Totals may not add because of individual rounding.  
<sup>3</sup> Not elsewhere classified.  
\* Less than 50 tons.

counting for the bulk of the trade are Duluth, Minn.; Milwaukee and Green Bay, Wis.; Detroit, Port Huron, Muskegon, and South Haven, Mich. Michigan and Wisconsin share the major portion, with Minnesota playing a very minor role.

From available records, the opening of the St. Lawrence Seaway apparently produced no immediate and drastic change in overseas trade in wood products through Lake States

ports. Overseas shipping is influenced by many complex factors, including trends in international distribution of production and consumption, tariff systems, and favorable conditions for world trade. However, expanded opportunities for Lake States wood products in overseas markets cannot be summarily ruled out, and the Station marketing research staff plans investigations into such possibilities.